



Leon County

Board of County Commissioners

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 16, 2011

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Leon County Breaks Ground on New Water Recycling Unit

Rainwater Cistern Expected to Become Largest Known System of its Kind in the Region

Leon County, Fla. – The Leon County Board of County Commissioners broke ground on a new rainwater recycling system Wednesday at the Leon County Extension Office, located at 615 Paul Russell Road, which will soon house a 40,000 gallon rainwater capture cistern that will allow diverted rainwater to irrigate the County's demonstration gardens.

This will be the largest known system of its kind in the region and will also serve as a unique learning opportunity for both the community in the area of stormwater reuse and water conservation. By safely using rainwater, nearly all of the facility's irrigation needs can be offset, resulting in approximately 400,000 gallons of conserved water annually collected in four massive 10,000-gallon cisterns.

"Combined with the existing efforts to convert our Cooperative Extension facility to a green-demonstration building with on-site educational services, this represents a significant opportunity to advance the energy conservation in Leon County and make further strides toward our alternative energy goals," said Chairman John E. Dailey.

Leon County was also recently awarded a Florida Clean Energy Grant that will provide the County with more than \$480,000 toward alternative energy enhancements. The grant, part of the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), will fund energy efficiencies at the Cooperative Extension facility, making it one of only a handful of net-zero buildings throughout the entire Southeast.

"Today we took part in both a literal and figurative groundbreaking," said County Administrator Parwez Alam. "Through the leadership of the Board of County Commissioners, Leon County has established itself as a front-runner in the pursuit of a more sustainable future."

In addition to the water cistern, the Cooperative Extension facility will receive energy efficiencies that include the addition of the largest solar photovoltaic (solar panel) system in Leon County – 60kW – surpassing the current largest known system, 50kW.

(More)

The grant will also fund 17 tons of geothermal closed-loop ground units, a system that uses the ground's relatively constant temperature to more efficiently provide heating, cooling and hot water for the building. The geothermal technology will allow for the replacement of a conventional water heater with a heat recovery system.

"Additionally, there will be a live, interactive energy monitoring station for visitors to observe the building's energy consumption and production," said Sustainability Manager Maggie Theriot. "For example, as a cloud passes overhead, visitors will be able to watch the actual effects of energy production in real time."

For more information, please contact Sustainability Manager Maggie Theriot at (850) 606-5300 or Jon D. Brown, Public Information Officer, at (850) 606-5300.

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